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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington 25, D. C.

DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS
of the
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE

To FES Staff Members:

This statement carries basic information. It should be helpful in guiding our operations and to help us understand and appreciate our responsibilities as members of the staff of the USDA and the Federal Extension Service as we engage in cooperative work with the Nation's land-grant colleges and universities. I would appreciate your careful reading of it. -

C. M. Ferguson, Administrator

Introduction

Extension work in agriculture and home economics is a cooperative or partnership undertaking between the Department of Agriculture and the individual land-grant colleges or universities. The Congress provides part of the funds to finance State extension work, and the Federal Extension Service administers the acts providing such funds, coordinates extension work among all the States and Territories, and gives counsel and aid in the development of State extension programs. In each State the land-grant college has responsibility for the conduct of extension work within the framework of National and State laws and the provisions of cooperative relations mutually agreed upon by the Department of Agriculture and the college. Although it is clear that the Federal Extension Service has a responsibility as a steward of public funds to implement Federal laws, policies, and regulations governing the use of such funds, there are still other policies of a program-operation nature which are established only by joint consultation of USDA-FES with land-grant officials through the mechanism of the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities.

Authorization

The legal basis for this cooperative relationship is the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914 (as amended by the Act of June 26, 1953, - Public Law 83, 7 USC 341-346, and as further amended by the Act of August 11, 1955 - Public Law 360, (69 Stat. 683-4) (disadvantaged farms), and Section 204(b)-205 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 USC 1623-24). The Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914 (as amended June 26, 1953) provides for financial assistance to the State land-grant colleges to conduct "agricultural extension work which shall be carried on in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture." Assent to the provisions of the original Smith-Lever Act was necessary before a State could receive its benefits. The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 provides that "To the maximum extent practicable marketing educational and demonstrational work done hereunder in cooperation with the States shall be done in cooperation with the State agricultural extension services."

The cooperative character of the program is further detailed in a uniform memorandum of understanding (revised 11-16-54) between the Department of Agriculture and the land-grant college or university. In the memorandum of understanding the Department agrees to maintain a Federal Extension Service which, under the direction of the Secretary, (1) shall be charged with the administration of the Smith-Lever Act as amended and other acts supporting cooperative extension work insofar as such administration is vested in the Department; (2) shall have primary responsibility for and leadership in all educational programs under the jurisdiction of the Department (except the graduate school); (3) shall be responsible for coordination of all educational phases of other programs of the Department, except the graduate school; and (4) shall act as the liaison between the Department and officials of the land-grant college or university on all matters relating to cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics and educational activities relating thereto.

Functions

The functions of the Federal Extension Service are set forth in Chapter 5 of the Administrative Regulations of the U. S. Department of Agriculture 1/ as follows:

"500. ASSIGNMENT OF FUNCTIONS. (S) The following assignment of functions is hereby made to the Federal Extension Service:

1/ Title 9, Regulations Pertaining to Individual Agencies - Administrative Regulations, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

932210

- a. Primary responsibility for and leadership in all educational programs and activities including the administration of the Smith-Lever Act, as amended (P. L. 83 - 83rd Congress), educational and demonstrational work in cooperative farm forestry conducted under section 5 of the Act of June 7, 1924, as amended by the Act of October 26, 1949 (16 USC 568), and all educational and demonstrational aspects of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 USC 1621-1627), and the Department's farm safety program.
- b. Coordination of all educational activities of the Department including examination and analysis of all such activities current and contemplated, review and approval of all educational activities or proposals prior to initiation, advice, and consultation on planning with heads of agencies, and reports and recommendations to the Secretary.
- c. Rendering educational and technical assistance to persons not receiving financial assistance under Title 5 of the Housing Act of 1949, including extension demonstration.
- d. Act as the liaison between the Department and officials of the land-grant colleges and universities on all matters relating to cooperative extension work and educational activities relating thereto."

Role of the Cooperative Extension Service

Due to a unique relationship between the State land-grant colleges and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, both institutions channel their educational services through the Cooperative Extension System. This makes it desirable to clarify the functions of the Federal Extension Service in this combined operation. Though many of the duties and functions are interrelated and overlapping, they involve three broad areas.

I. THE FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE IN ITS ROLE AS THE EDUCATIONAL ARM OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.*

- A. Administration of Federal laws and regulations which involve cooperative extension work.

* Some of these functions are related to and overlap with those as outlined in Section II.

1. Extension legislation (Smith-Lever Act as amended in 1953 and 1955, Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946), and rules and regulations relating thereto by the Secretary of Agriculture.
 - a. Apportion Federal funds to States as prescribed in the Smith-Lever Act, as amended, and allocate funds provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.
 - b. Review and approve State extension budgets, project agreements, and annual plans of work.
 - c. Examine State fiscal and administrative procedures and operations to insure that Federal funds and offset thereto have been expended in accordance with the law, and with the rules and regulations set forth by the Department.
 - d. Review and appraise State reports and use them as a basis for preparation of national reports.
 - e. Review State recommendations and make appointments of "agents without compensation."
 - f. Handle matters in relation to the use of the 4-H emblem and name.
2. Administer general legislation and rules and regulations relating to Federal employees and the conduct of the business of the Federal government which affect State extension services and cooperative employees, such as:
 - a. Cooperative employees' coverage under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act.
 - b. Cooperative employee participation in the U. S. Civil Service Retirement System.
 - c. Cooperative employee coverage under the Federal Group Life Insurance Program.
 - d. Cooperative employee coverage under the Unemployment Compensation Program.
 - e. Employee use of the free mailing privilege.

- f. Occupancy of Federal space under control of the General Service Administration and the U. S. Post Office Department.
 - g. State extension office procurement through General Service Administration facilities.
 - h. Technical Reports Act of 1942.
- 3. Presenting to the Secretary of Agriculture, Bureau of the Budget, and the appropriate committees of the Congress, situations, problems, progress, accomplishments, and needs of the Cooperative Extension System requiring changes in Federal rules and regulations, national legislation, increased Federal financial support, and similar matters which arise out of the Federal-State cooperative extension partnership.
- 4. Reporting to and consulting with the Agricultural Marketing Advisory Committees on marketing work financed under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.
- B. Coordination of that part of agency programs of the Department that are primarily educational and integration of such programs with the extension programs of the several States.
 - 1. Adapting and making available through the State land-grant colleges the findings, such as the compilation, analysis, and synthesis of statistics, of the research agencies of the Department.
 - 2. Advising other agencies about publications, visual aids, and other materials needed for cooperative extension use.
 - 3. Arranging for channeling to the State extension services significant aspects of the administrative programs of the Department agencies and Secretarial policies for adaptation to Extension's educational work.
 - 4. Keeping research bureaus and program agencies currently informed on progress being made in obtaining acceptance of research findings, need for further research, understanding of agency programs, and related matters of concern to the Department.

5. Seeing that the points of view of the State extension services are presented and considered by the appropriate officials when Department programs and policies of concern to the Cooperative Extension System are being developed.
6. Providing national and regional leadership for special extension program activities in which specific agencies of both the Department of Agriculture and State land-grant colleges have a direct interest. Examples are listed as follows: (a) regional marketing programs, (b) Farm and Home Development, (c) Program projection, (d) Rural Development, (e) animal and plant disease control and eradication, (f) national inventory of soil and water needs, (g) projects seed needs program, (h) clean grain, (i) farm safety, (j) committee on roadside development, (k) training of foreign nationals in extension education and technical assistance as provided for in the memorandum of agreement between the USDA and the ICA dated February 18, 1954, as amended by Appendix II dated June 1, 1955, and (l) communications and other training programs.
7. During national or regional emergency disaster, directing or assisting with such activities as may be appropriate for the cooperative service, such as drought, floods and hurricanes.

II. THE FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OTHER THAN AGRICULTURE AND THE ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.*

- A. Establishing and maintaining good extension public relations nationally.
- B. Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with various agencies and Federal departments other than Agriculture, such as: U. S. Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service, International Cooperation Administration, Reclamation Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U. S. Weather Bureau, Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, Office of Education, Civil Defense Administration, Children's Bureau, Women's Bureau, Bureau of Public Roads, Foreign Embassies, and United Nations agencies.

* Some of these functions are related to and overlap with those outlined in Section I.

- C. Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with national offices of private organizations, such as: Farm organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, industry and trade groups, press associations, magazines, radio and television networks, educational associations, foundations, professional societies, welfare organizations, churches, and organizations interested in foreign programs.
- D. Managing or assisting with management of national and regional extension activities, such as: National 4-H Conference, National 4-H Club Congress, National 4-H Club Week, National 4-H Club and other fellowships, National Home Demonstration Week, National Policy Conference, National Outlook and Marketing Conference, National Agricultural Extension Center for Advanced Study, National Project in Agricultural Communications, and national or regional workshops, or other conferences and events.
- E. Operating national services, such as: Publication of Extension Service Review (the national extension magazine), periodic newsletters relating to developments in administration, supervision, information, personnel training, extension research, training, and subject-matter aspects of extension, information service on the conduct of extension work in States to members of the Congress and other Federal agencies, a general clearing house for information on extension work.
- F. Preparing publications, bibliographies, visual aids, training materials, report forms, and numerous other materials having general application to the conduct of extension, or which would be impractical for each State to prepare for itself.

III. PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE TO STATE EXTENSION SERVICE PERSONNEL WITH SPECIFIC PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM UNDER WAY IN THE SEVERAL STATES.

- A. Because of the national viewpoint, knowledge of the successful experience of other States and peculiar competence in specialized areas of work, members of the Federal Extension Service staff assist with a wide range of problems incident to the conduct of extension with the States. Such assistance enables States to derive strength from other parts of the nationwide extension system and increase the total service to agriculture and the national welfare. These services include:
1. Counseling and aid in the development and maintenance of sound extension programs based on the immediate and longtime needs of agriculture; marketing and utilization of agricultural products; analysis of industry trends and problems affecting particular industries in specific States or areas; improving program planning procedures through farm and home unit approach; program projection; adjusting established programs to keep them abreast of new research findings and social and economic trends; expanding programs to urban areas; initiating new phases of programs, such as retailer marketing, public affairs, and marketing information to consumers; educational work on pest control operation; establishing clear-cut objectives; and work on home economic and youth problems.
 2. Counseling with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy and its subcommittees, with State extension directors and supervisors on administrative matters, such as organizational structures and operating policies, (assistance to the States in providing basic information; teaching and training materials and improved extension techniques and methods; assisting with the application of subject matter to market, farm, home, youth and community problems; problems of program determination; coordination and integration), relationships to research and resident teaching divisions of the college and with the general public, financial problems, and general administrative and management services.

3. Advising on problems connected with the supervision of county extension work, such as, development of teaching plans, use of effective and suitable teaching methods, team work among county and State staff, and maintenance of good relations with county officials, local organizations, and the general public.
4. Assisting with the application of subject matter to agriculture and home economic problems, such as, assistance in identifying and solving problems of importance to which the extension service can and should contribute, acquisition and use of facts pertaining to problems, use of best and latest findings from all available sources, coordination of areas of subject matter involved in special problems, selection and use of teaching methods appropriate to subject matter content (farm and home development), and the preparation of new subject-matter materials to meet special situations.
5. Helping with the organization and operation of an adequate information program in support of State and county teaching activities, such as, effective use of mass media, improvement of publications, and employment of visual devices and techniques.
6. Assisting in the development and conduct of an adequate personnel training program, including preparatory training for extension workers, criteria for evaluating the contribution of individual staff members, inservice training, advanced and graduate study, and the preparation of training materials.
7. Helping to bring about improvement through evaluation research including report analyses, conduct of field studies as a means of appraising progress and evaluating teaching methods and procedures, and the application of the findings of research to specific problems.



